Frequently Asked Questions - Monkeypox

What is Monkeypox/MPX?
Monkeypox is a rare disease caused by infection with the monkeypox virus (same family of viruses as smallpox). It can make you sick with a rash or sores and sometimes flu-like symptoms.

Before the 2022 outbreak, most MPX cases in people were seen in countries in Africa. When seen outside Africa, it was due to international travel to those countries. Currently, it is seen in places where it typically has not been present like the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

How is it spread?
MPX can spread to anyone through close, personal, or skin-to-skin contact with someone who has MPX.

It can spread by:
• touching their sores or rash
• touching objects, fabrics, surfaces they touched or used (i.e. towels, bedding, clothes, etc.)
• talking closely with them through their respiratory droplets or saliva
• hugging, kissing, massaging, touching
• close, sexual contact

Can you get seriously ill and die from monkeypox?
Symptoms are typically mild and, in most cases, go way on their own within a few weeks. Monkeypox is rarely fatal and over 99% of people who get it are likely to survive.

However, for some, an infection can lead to more serious medical complications and even death. People with compromised immunity, children under age 8, people with history of eczema, pregnant or breastfeeding individuals, as with many other illnesses, have a higher risk of more serious illness. Most people fully recover.

Am I at risk to get monkeypox?
Currently, the risk in the U.S. is believed to be low. Monkeypox does not spread easily between people, but anyone in close contact with a person with MPX can get it and should take steps to protect themselves.

People who do not have MPX symptoms cannot spread the virus to others. However, if symptomatic, it can spread from the time symptoms begin to when rash is fully healed.

It is also possible to get it from infected animals if bitten or scratched, or by eating meat or using products from the affected animal.
What are the symptoms?
Typically, MPX presents with flu-like symptoms within 5 - 21 days after being infected. A rash may develop within 1 - 3 days after a fever. However, in the current outbreak, many people are not experiencing the flu-like symptoms and the rash might be the first sign of the infection.

Some symptoms include:
• A rash that progresses through different stages (flat spots, raised bumps, pimples and blisters) on the face, inside the mouth, and on other parts of the body, like the hands, feet, chest, genitals, or anus.
• Fever
• Headache
• Muscle aches and backaches
• Swollen glands
• Chills
• Fatigue
• Rectal pain or bleeding

Sometimes, people get a rash first, followed by other symptoms and others only experience a rash. The illness typically lasts 2 - 4 weeks.

What should I do if I have symptoms?
• Contact your healthcare provider if you notice a new or unexplained rash (share concern about MPX).
• If you don’t have a provider, contact your local health department.
• Isolate from others until a healthcare provider has examined you.

How can I keep from spreading to others?
• Avoid close contact (including intimate physical contact) with others until a healthcare provider examines you.
• Avoid close contact with pets or other animals until a healthcare provider examines you.
• If you’re waiting for test results, follow the same precautions.
• If your test is positive, stay isolated until your rash has healed, all scabs have fallen off, and a fresh layer of intact skin has formed.

Could my pets get monkeypox?
Monkeypox is zoonotic, meaning it can spread between animals and people. Animal-to-human transmission can occur by bite or scratch, bush meat preparation, direct contact with body fluids or lesion material, or indirect contact with lesion material, such as through contaminated bedding. There have not been any documented cases of human-to-animal transmission.
What treatments/vaccinations are available?
There are no treatments specifically for monkeypox virus infections, but there is treatment for smallpox that appears to be effective for monkeypox. Monkeypox and smallpox viruses are genetically similar, which means that antiviral drugs and vaccines developed to protect against smallpox may be used to treat and prevent monkeypox virus infections.

Antivirals, such as tecovirimat (TPOXX), may be recommended for people who are severely ill, or more likely to get severely ill, like patients with weakened immune systems.

The U.S. government has two stockpiled vaccines—JYNNEOS and ACAM2000—that can prevent monkeypox in people who have been exposed to the virus. Vaccines may be recommended for people who have had contact with someone who has monkeypox, or for healthcare and public health workers who may have been exposed to the virus.

Can anyone get the vaccine?
CDC does not recommend widespread vaccination against monkeypox, at this time. However, vaccination may be recommended for some people who:

• Are close personal contacts of people with monkeypox
• May have been exposed to the virus.
• May have increased risk of being exposed to the virus, such as people who perform laboratory testing to diagnose monkeypox.